



DCH Team,

November seems to have flown by! Within just a few short weeks, we will be embarking on a new year. Wow. And how about those Atlanta Braves!!! Incredible and unbelievable! They have truly made the city proud!

Although my comments will be very brief this month, there are a couple of exciting updates I'd like to convey to you regarding the agency. First and foremost, we welcomed two new staff members to the team this month:

- Kevin Stanford joined us as our Chief Compliance and Technology Officer in anticipation of Joe Hood's retirement. Kevin has more than 15 years of state experience, and comes to us from the Georgia Technology Authority.
- Brian Lipton joined us as a Senior Policy Advisor working in the Commissioner's Office. Brian previously worked with the Georgia Student Finance Commission as their budget director, and also previously served with the Office of Planning and Budget.



We are also actively recruiting for a few additional open roles within the agency, so expect to hear additional announcements regarding new hires in the coming weeks. This is an exciting time for the agency, and I'm thrilled to have these experienced professionals come on board as we continue to move the agency forward. And fortunately for DCH, Joe Hood has agreed to stay on for another year as a Senior Advisor to assist the agency with some of its many initiatives!

Also, you may have heard me talk previously about a key focus of mine: internal performance and assessing whether we have the right goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in place to ensure that we're doing the work needed to support our overall mission of improving access and outcomes to health care in Georgia. We have asked the Carl Vinson Institute of Georgia of the University of Georgia to engage with us in our work in crafting the right KPIs to help us move the needle in specific ways that create a unified cadence of accountability and transparency within agency. We look

forward to getting that work started with the Carl Vinson team within the next couple of weeks, and will continue to share updates as that work progresses.

In addition to the quick updates I just mentioned above, I'd also like to invite you to check out the second part of the two-part series spotlighting our Performance and Care Management Office. This month, we learn more about their work around postpartum care, and the steps they are taking to help save the lives of more new moms. Also, the Communications team put out a call for you to send in your expressions of gratitude, and you answered that call. Find out what some of your team members had to say about thankfulness during this season of thanksgiving.

On this past November 11, we observed Veterans Day in honor of those individuals who have served, and those who continue to serve our country. I know that DCH has quite a few veterans on staff, and I'd like to send a "THANK YOU" to our veterans of all branches for your sacrifice and bravery in serving our country. We honor each of you.

Before I close, I want to recognize some employee milestones within the past month:

- **Five-Year Anniversary**

- Michael Bledsoe
- Sammy Foster
- Allison Roberson

- **15-Year Anniversary**

- Pamela Gordon
- David Stone
- Leslie Vaughns

- **20-Year Anniversary**

- Jill Crump
- Myrthia Hall

We really couldn't do what we do as an agency without the dedicated employees that work for us, so I'd like to congratulate and thank each of you for your service to DCH and to Georgia.

If you have any questions for me, please feel free to reach out. I'd love to hear from you.

Thank you for all you do for the communities we serve.

Caylee

caylee.noggle@dch.ga.gov



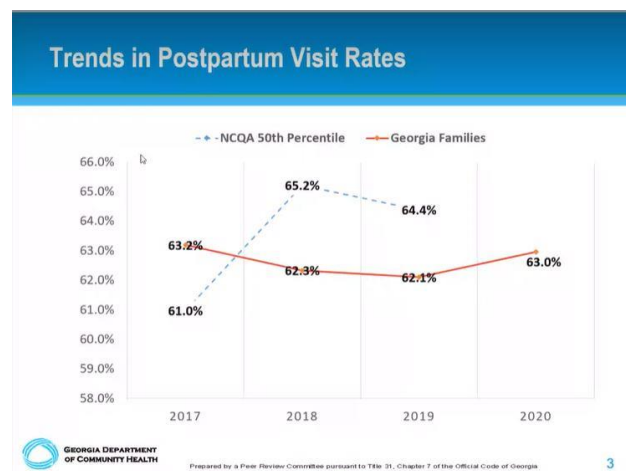
DCHNOW! Spotlight – Performance and Care Management Office

“Owning the Narrative – The Fourth Trimester”

Part Two of a Two-Part Series

You have heard or read the stories. Serena Williams has one. Beyonce has one. Even Atlanta native, Judge Glenda Hatchett, has one regarding her late daughter-in-law. As more “renowned” women continue to come forth regarding their personal postpartum stories, media traction picks up surrounding the issue for a brief moment, and then fades away. But what about the women with less notoriety? How often are their stories being told? [Statistics](#) show that “more than half of pregnancy-related deaths occur in the postpartum period, with 12 percent occurring after six weeks postpartum.¹”

Undoubtedly, what’s commonly known as “the fourth trimester” is the most critical time in a new mom’s life.



Data shows that Georgia (red line) lags as compared to other states in the nation when it comes to postpartum visit rates. PCMO is optimistic that the 1115 Waiver will help improve these numbers.

Last month, we talked about the Performance and Care Management Office (PCMO), and how much of their work entails their use of data to further enhance quality and program improvement for various initiatives implemented within DCH. For the team leads, Dr. Kelvin Holloway, Dr. Carla Willis and Dr. Gloria Beecher, postpartum care stands out as a healthcare concern that troubles them greatly -- one that ignited a fire in them to take a bold stance and proactively “do something.”

“In April of this year, the announcement came that the state’s ‘Georgia Postpartum Extension’ section 1115 demonstration waiver had been approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS),”

says Dr. Carla Willis, Director, Performance, Quality, and Outcomes within PCMO. “We absolutely saw this as a huge win for our Medicaid moms, and the timing could not have

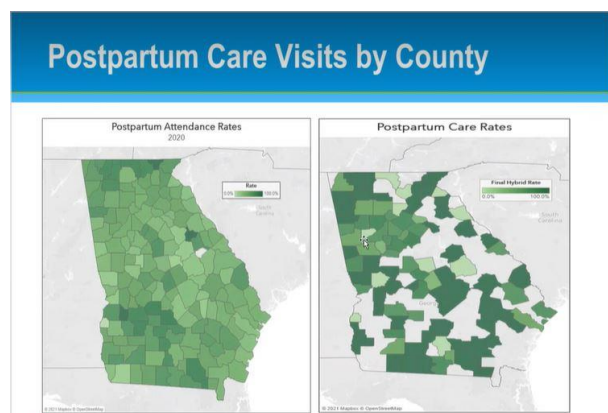
been more perfect. It was also during that time that we learned that our Quality Improvement team had been accepted as a participant in the ‘Improving Postpartum Care Learning Collaborative Affinity Group,’ which presented a huge opportunity for us to continue our ongoing work of improving maternal health.”

The Improving Postpartum Care Learning Collaborative Affinity Group is sort of a big deal. As part of the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services’ (CMCS) Maternal and Infant Health Initiative, the purpose of this affinity group was to bring together like-minded individuals who were interested in developing and pursuing strategies that addressed postpartum care among the Medicaid and CHIP populations. Although the process for acceptance was intensive, requiring the completion of a detailed application as well as a rigorous interview process, the team made Georgia one of only nine states nationally accepted into the program – a respectable honor that speaks volumes to the work the team is doing on behalf of new Medicaid moms throughout the state.

“The Collaborative allows us a 12-month window to do small tests of change that can be implemented on a wider scale, if such tests show potential to improve maternal outcome,” said Dr. Gloria Beecher, Director, Population Health and Quality Planning. “CMCS was looking for people who were dedicated to solving the problem – people who could hit the ground running as quickly as possible and have the highest likelihood of sharing quantifiable results that would lead to positive action at the end of those 12 months. Being a part of this affinity group has us working with comparable partners who are just as dedicated as we are about helping our moms. This opportunity has exponentially elevated our means of getting that work done, and has added another notch on our belt in positioning ourselves as major thought leaders in the maternal healthcare sphere.”

CONQUERING RURAL SPACES


In speaking with Dr. Beecher and Dr. Willis about the work they are doing around postpartum care, you can sense that this is a passion project for them. They both noted that according to the [latest available data](#) released by the Georgia Department of Public Health, non-Hispanic Black women are 2.7 times as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than their White counterparts. Statistics like this are heartbreaking, but what was not lost to both Beecher and Willis was the vicinity in which the data showed these instances are most likely to occur: rural areas. With this knowledge under their belt, PCMO decided to drop their anchor and focus their efforts on improving postpartum care for black women in rural spaces where postpartum care/maternal mortality overall is an acutely deadly



Data collected by the PCMO team shows the areas most affected by low rates of postpartum care and visits.

issue, and exacerbated by insufficient access to care. And, while the approval of the 1115 Waiver, which extended Medicaid state plan benefits from 60 days to six months for postpartum women, proved to be key in advancing the state's efforts in improving the health of new moms, the team is hoping that the additional time will drive up those crucial postpartum doctors' visit rates.

"By now, I think everyone knows that what we do as an office is led by the data that we accrue through our work processes," continues Dr. Willis. "Through our data, we know that ideally, we'd need at least one year of postpartum care to have the best opportunity of saving our moms, but we are absolutely grateful for the six months we were given.

AIM & Goals	
Aim	Goals
Improve post-partum health outcome for Black women by end of March 2022	Increase E&M follow-up visits by 50% or more of mothers with diagnosis of cardiomyopathy.
Representation of the aim and goals the PCMO team is working against to better assist new moms in rural areas.	
 <small>GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH</small> <small>Prepared by a Peer Review Committee pursuant to Title 31, Chapter 7 of the Official Code of Georgia</small>	

We actually used our in-house data to help us develop specific aims and goals that we are working against to meet a March 2022 deadline we have within our affinity group. With our increased focus on improving evaluation and management follow-up visits for moms, we're hoping to show that we have indeed tipped the scales in favor of enhancing those numbers. Even if it's by a tiny bit, that would be a huge success for us."

As PCMO has used their data to track the new moms in rural areas

who are struggling in the aftermath of their deliveries, they have found willing partners with their CMOs who are just as eager to see a drastic drop in these maternal mortality stats. Throughout this process, they have found the CMOs to be quite thoughtful in their approach of getting more moms in for follow-up appointments. One CMO has opted to have a practitioner reach out directly to providers for consulting sessions. During these sessions, providers are reminded that a mom has delivered and needs an appointment – a reminder that prompts the provider to consider its practice's reputation and may incite more of a sense of urgency in caring for the new moms. Another CMO has chosen to provide a more tangible incentive to moms who keep their appointments, by offering gift cards to those who keep their follow-up appointments.

"I don't think we can overstate just how valuable and supportive the CMOs have been," continues Dr. Willis. "They were like, 'Just tell us what you want us to do, and we'll do it.' We've had their buy in from the start, and none of the work we're doing for our moms could have been possible without them. Sure, we've still got a lot of work to do, but we are happy with the progress we've made so far. Even after our connection with the affinity group ends, we will continue making inroads to move that needle down on behalf of our moms – and when I say 'our moms,' I am speaking specifically about our Medicaid moms. They need us, and they deserve the very best we have to offer. From

my viewpoint, this work will remain ongoing as we continue to discover and implement best practices that leads to more saved lives.”



“IN THE SPIRIT OF THANKFULNESS”

What a year this has been! Often, when we think of November, we think of family and reflect on the spirit of thankfulness. We reached out to you, our DCH team members, and asked you to submit your musings around the themes of “thankfulness” and “gratitude.” The submissions we received were phenomenally thought-filled expressions! Here are just some of the ways your team members completed the statement...

“I am most thankful for...”



Cassandra Taylor
Accounts Payable
Office of Financial Management

“... my family.”

Kathy Chatmon
RN Nurse Surveyor
Healthcare Facility Regulation Division

“... the opportunity to help preserve our vulnerable residents’ rights to quality life.”



Nigel Lange
Deputy Inspector General
Office of Inspector General

“...my family and vacations!”



Cynthia R. Petty
Compliance Specialist II
Healthcare Facility Regulation Division



"...FAMILY! This is my village. We love and support each other and even disagree at times, but when we get together, it is so much fun! This Thanksgiving is the first without our patriarch, my daddy, but we shared stories about him – we laughed, we cried, and we looked around the room at what a legacy he left behind. We realized how very blessed we are! Yes, I am most thankful for my family ❤️"

Rashawn Pratt

Compliance Investigator 2
Office of Inspector General

"I have so many wonderful reasons to be thankful. Being thankful allows me to experience life to the fullest. I believe it is important to be thankful for my family and friends. Thankfulness allows me to appreciate what I have and cherish it."



Marisol R. Owens

Third Party Liability Director
Office of Inspector General



“...my Mom (Mami) Solange and the opportunity to hand her the keys to her new condo close to my home. I am also grateful to be able to celebrate her turning 81 years old in a few weeks. We are very close and I get to enjoy her

company, friendship and support. We took this picture last summer at Pelican Pete’s in Lake Lanier when I handed over her new set of keys.”

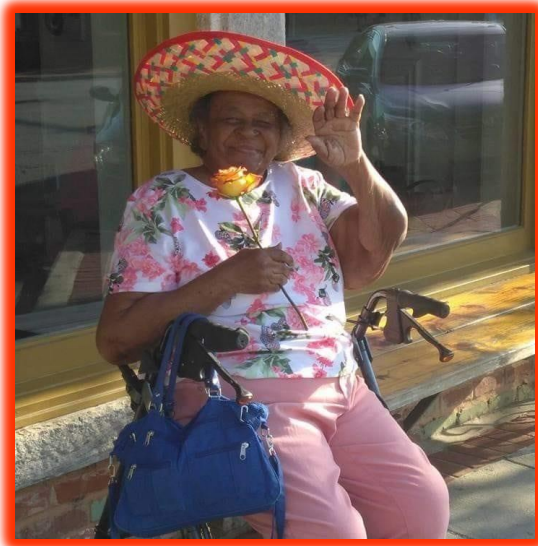
Wanda Griswold, MHA
Audit & Compliance Supervisor
Office of Inspector General

“...every day that I’m allowed to awaken to see another day. During the Thanksgiving season, I reflect on the many rewards of life, health, and strength. I’m thankful for all of my family, friends, coworker, and even for people I don’t personally know. It’s important to me to appreciate things we can often take for granted (like air, smiling, hugs, laughter and kindness). So, I’m thankful that I can live, laugh and love.”



Marilyn Jones
Case Intake Analyst/Compliance Monitor I

Office of Inspector General



"...the time and encouraging love and skills my mother gave me up to her passing at 92 years young. My mother was a true Taurus with a strong and inspiring will and expressions of love. Her firmness in discipline and guidance was strict, but always fair. I miss our outings and celebrations. Attached is her on her 91st birthday with her beautiful smile. I am most thankful to GOD for choosing her to be my mom. She lives in my heart daily and forever."

Rabina Sheriff

Economic Support Specialist
DCH - Katie Beckett Unit



"... my family, friends, coworkers, and everyone else that has crossed my path. They have all inspired me in some way or the other. Most of them I see and mingle with every day. The one person that inspires me the most, however, is my husband. He always tells me that there is nothing that we want in this life that is impossible to achieve; do what you love and love what you do and what you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you

become by achieving your goals. (I am sure he saw this quote somewhere, but it works for me). 😊"



Angela Freeman

Compliance Monitor II
Office of Inspector General



"...being an aunt who cares deeply for my nieces and nephew.

The special children in these photos are Demauri & Tamya. Since I never had children of my own, I always make sure I follow through in providing gifts on their Birthdays...or just because.

Every child should enjoy their childhood because they only get one chance at being a child. I make sure a child knows the love of every second spent to smile, laugh, run and play. As he inspects the birthday gift I bought him the bike in the photo, the response was, 'Thank you Auntie Angie.' 😊



My niece, Tamya, enjoyed jumping on the trampoline, even though she was diagnosed with a bone disease which has caused her play to be limited, but on this day, I was shocked to see her enjoying herself jumping and playing, I am thankful I can share love to children whether related or non-related."

Susan C. DeWitt
Nurse Surveyor
Healthcare Facility Regulation Division



"... the blessing of my granddaughters, Hope Lilly-Grace, Madison & Emily Adeline. They are a treasure of giggles & grace. The eldest, Hope Lilly-Grace was born on Thanksgiving in a hospital where I worked. That evening, I was asked to switch to Labor & Delivery (L&D) to help out for the evening. Being a previous L&D nurse, I checked the nursery window every chance I got. What I didn't know at the time was that a little baby with reddish hair peeping from her newborn cap, would join our family 3 ½ years later. Deep in our hearts, both she and I believe I was meant to be there that night. She turns 13 next week – a teenager! She has been a delight and such a blessing to our family. We thank God for miracles such as this."

Kiana Jackson
Communications Specialist
Office of Communications



“... the courage to take a leap. I’ve jumped into some new adventures during 2021, and I’ve learned important lessons in courage, letting go, and moving forward.

Walking into the unknown, and doing something new for the first time, can seem daunting to many people. While it’s more comfortable to stay where we are, doing and thinking habitually, growth occurs outside of our comfort zones. On my 30th birthday, I took myself skydiving, a bucket-

list activity I’ve always wanted to try. The weather was beautiful, after a few days of rain. Naturally I was nervous, especially when boarding the smallest airplane I’d ever seen in person. I felt the temperature drop rapidly as we ascended more than 14,000 feet in the air. The kindhearted videographer identified a point in the distance and said it was a mountain in Alabama. While the four other seasoned skydivers were visibly eager to jump, my hands began to sweat underneath the gloves the tandem instructor provided. As I watched the earth fall away, I felt my nervousness rising, but I matched it with my curiosity to see what it might feel like to fly. My courage grew as I gave in to the reality that I was on the cusp of realizing an unknown experience - skydiving.



At the door of the airplane, my tandem instructor and I were the last to drop. It was time to literally let go and trust that all was well. I waved to the camera, and my mind went blank. Thankfully, the instructor tilted my head back, and that simple action reminded me of the fact that that was the moment to surrender. I had to physically let go of the plane to skydive, but I also let go of any fear to allow courage, curiosity, and faith to take over.

The freefall almost felt like doing a bellyflop into air. I knew I was falling, but it felt more like floating. When the parachute opened, we gently glided down towards earth. I took in the panoramic views of Georgia as I deeply breathed fresh air. I’ll never forget the sight of my tennis shoes above treetops. I felt fulfilled and alive during my skydive, more so than I could have felt if I never summoned the courage to try.

My landing was a little rough due to a small gust of wind at the last second, but I landed in a field of flowers and wasn’t injured. Sometimes things don’t go perfectly, but they’re still successful and satisfying. The lead instructor with decades of skydiving experience gave me a bit of advice, saying, “Any landing you walk away from is a good landing.”



My skydiving experience and that advice encourages me to jump into more adventures in life. Little did I know, I would be engaged to my best friend before my birthday weekend was over. I'm thrilled to hop into my next life adventure; and I'm thankful for the courage, confidence, and faith to let go and enjoy it in the moment.

May you and your loved ones jump into a joyful adventure this holiday season and into the new year."



CLARK'S CHRISTMAS KIDS TOY DRIVE A HUGE SUCCESS!

Each year, as part of a collaborative effort with consumer expert and radio personality, Clark Howard, the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) operates a program called "Clark's Christmas Kids" to help make the holiday season brighter for children and older youth in Georgia's foster care system. With more than 7,000 children in 100+ counties throughout the state hoping for a truly Merry Christmas, the call was issued to all state agencies to assist in making these dreams come true.

DCH, you answered the call, and you answered the call SPECTACULARLY!!! All 24 children assigned to DCH have been sponsored, and 19 additional children were sponsored from a waiting list of additional DCH team members! Unwrapped gifts are due to the Office of Human Resources by Monday, November 29.

THANK YOU DCH for your willingness to ALWAYS serve above and beyond the ask. We appreciate you and honor your kindness and compassion for our foster children and youth!

Congratulations
to the **2021-2022 Cabinet Members**
of the Distinguished Communicators,
the DCH Chapter of Toastmasters' International!



Simon Abisoye
President



Lamarte Bell
Vice President



Priyanka Parekh
VP of
Membership



**Angela
Kapatenakis**
VP of
Membership



Atiya Hasan
VP of
Public Relations



**Jacenta
Carmichael-
Duncan**
Sergeant-at-Arms



Renee Peoples
Secretary



Kudos Shoutout

Kudos to You, SORH Team!



In honor of [National Rural Health Day](#), the Georgia Department of Community Health would like to give “kudos” to the State Office of Rural Health for their commitment, compassion, dedication, and service to the people of rural Georgia. Every year, this day is hosted and organized by The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH). This year’s theme is “celebrate the power of rural” with a focus on honoring, recognizing, and supporting the community-minded spirit of rural towns across the nation.

Out of Georgia’s 10.5 million residents, almost 2.3 million live in one of Georgia’s 120 rural counties. SORH actively supports these residents and their communities through important programs and offices such as the State Primary Care Office, the Hospital Services Program, the Georgia Farmworkers’ Health Program, the Health Care for the Homeless Program, the Rural Hospital Stabilization Grant Program, and other Legislatively Directed Programs.

To learn more about SORH and their work, visit the [fact sheet webpage](#) on our site.

WELCOME DCH NEW HIRES !



DCH Celebrates the Braves' 2021 World Series win!





Abundantly grateful for all that you do.

**HAPPY
THANKSGIVING**



Members, there is still time to earn your 2021 Wellness Reward

The 2021 Wellness Program ends November 30, 2021 — don't wait!

Each member and covered spouse who completes the Kaiser Permanente Wellness Program is eligible to receive a \$500 reward card, up to \$1,000 per household.

Not sure what steps you need to complete to earn your reward? View and track the status of your activities at kp.org/engage.

Don't forget! Your COVID-19 Vaccine can get you an additional \$150

The State Health Benefit Plan is encouraging all SHBP members to get vaccinated against COVID-19 by offering a **\$150** vaccination incentive program. **That's \$150 for you and \$150 for your covered spouse! Don't delay!** You'll need to be fully vaccinated by November 30, 2021, to earn the incentive. Members already vaccinated can receive their incentive, too! [Get the details](#).

Coronavirus/COVID-19

[Learn how to protect yourself and get care](#)

For COVID-19 screenings and personalized care plans for minor health conditions like cold, flu, or sinus problems, [complete an e-visit](#). To talk to an advice nurse 24/7, call 1-855-512-5997.

Walk-In Flu Shots

Throughout the flu season, Kaiser Permanente members can get a no-cost flu shot during any doctor visit or at one of our walk-in clinics at select Kaiser Permanente

Food for Health

Will you be looking for something lighter to eat in the days after Thanksgiving? Try [this salad](#) that incorporates some of your favorite Thanksgiving flavors. Also, check out the other seasonal healthy recipes on Kaiser Permanente's [Food for Health](#).



A woman with short dark hair and glasses is sitting in a wooden armchair. She is wearing a blue and white floral patterned top and white pants. She is holding a teal-colored smartphone in her hands and looking down at the screen. The background is a bright, indoor setting with a window, a potted plant, and a framed picture on the wall.

Is it a cold, the flu or COVID-19?

Stuffy nose, fever, sore throat. What does it mean? Here's the information you'll need to guide you in distinguishing the signs of the cold, the flu and COVID-19. [Get the symptom checker here.](#)

Visit kp.org/coronavirus or care, testing and self-care tip.

[illegible]

Managing or preventing diabetes



More than 1 in 3 Americans have prediabetes¹ — and according to the CDC, 90% don't even know it. The good news is that most cases of type 2 diabetes are preventable. Healthy lifestyle changes can help you avoid, control, or even reverse the disease.² If you'd like more information on preventing or managing diabetes, visit kp.org/diabetes.

1. "Prediabetes: Your Chance to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes." Centers for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/prediabetes.html>, accessed December 10, 2019.
2. "Simple Steps to Preventing Diabetes." Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/disease-prevention/diabetes-prevention/preventing-diabetes-full-story/>, accessed December 10, 2019.



Seasonal depression and how to treat it

Many of us look forward to winter – the gatherings with friends and family, watching cheesy holiday movies, extra vacation. But for some people, the long hours of darkness can cause feelings of sadness and depression. This condition is called seasonal affective disorder or seasonal affective depression (SAD).

SAD can disrupt your sleep, affect your appetite and take away your energy. Fortunately, treatment options are available. SAD can seriously impact your health and well-being, so you should visit your doctor if you experience any of these symptoms.

Your doctor may suggest medical treatment options, such as antidepressants or suggest nonmedical options such as lifestyle changes. Some lifestyle changes include:



Boosting sunlight exposure. Spend time outside when the sun is shining or sit by a sunny window.



Exercising. Getting your body moving also increases serotonin levels. A good target is 30 minutes a day, five times a week.



Eating healthy. Maintaining a balanced diet can help reduce cravings that sometimes come with depression, such as cravings for starches and sweets.



Staying social. Staying involved with other people on a regular basis is important to our mental health.